

GAYLORD MARKWARTZ, SUNSHINE HOME FOR SENIORS

Sunshine's as nice as any Home could be,
away from home, that is -- most are put here
by families who don't need a Gramps or Granny
sitting like eyesores and leaking on their decor.

When North Pole Eskimos got old and useless
they used to be left alone to freeze to death --
who today could be that cruel and ruthless?
Bring them to us and let them gasp for breath.

Nurses around the clock -- it's so much more comfy
than getting in the way of the partying teenagers --
checkers, chess sets, magazines, color TV --
a hotel for wattled bluehairs and arthritic geezers.

I try my best to make it bearable
but when you're a prison warden how can you please?
Whatever way you look at it, it's terrible.
Something's to be said for the age-revering Chinese.

THE PEACOCK'S SHEEN

There was an eager group that got together
at the library and read their poetry --
free verse, quatrains, sonnets, delicate haiku --
in that new room where chairs were soft and deep.

The reference librarian, who had had things published,
a student or two, and some fortyish housewives --
all with their scrawled notebooks or neat folders,
nervous to show their souls off in that light.

Oh that's good! Great, Joan! They grew bolder.
Why don't we start a little magazine?
And all chipped in, and someone knew an artist
who drew a cover for The Peacock's Sheen.

A few friends bought it, and the college bookstore
displayed it for a while at the front,
but of the 500 copies that were printed
they couldn't sell one more than 61.

Well, what do you expect -- that's this country --
billions for bombs and only pennies for art.
They aren't discouraged, still meet once a month
there in the tasteful room that's set apart

and spread their sometimes startling imageries
under the fluorescence for each other
while out in the smoggy Orange County dark
sirens whoop to the latest rape or murder.